

Time Bombs or Tidal Waves? The View from Blightly

**Prof Simon Wessely, Director, King's
Centre for Military Health Research; Vice
Dean, Institute of Psychiatry, King's
College London: Civ Consultant Advisor
Psychiatry British Army**



COMPETING INTERESTS

- **Lots of funding from UK research councils, medical and veterans charities, UK Ministry of Defence and US Departments of Defense**
- **Never had a penny from Pharma**
- **But frankly, my university will take money from anyone provided it comes with overheads**

USA TODAY

Many Iraq veterans fighting an enemy within

By Marilyn Elias, USA TODAY

Nearly 1 out of 5 combat soldiers are leaving Iraq with a mental health problem, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, suggests a landmark study published in today's *New England Journal of Medicine*. It is the first large survey on front-line forces' mental health.

THE Sun

Forces

THE LATEST FROM THE FRONTLINE

Tsunami of post-traumatic stress haunts our heroes

NEWS JERSEY

Holidays for Heroes in Jersey says PTSD cases rising

theguardian

Former soldier wins MoD payout over post-traumatic stress disorder

Bomb disposal expert claimed failure to properly diagnose PTSD left him more vulnerable to future stressful events

MailOnline

British troops back from Afghanistan are 10 times more likely to suffer mental illness, say MOD

Speech

Liam Fox: We must defuse timebomb of veterans' mental health

Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox , Wednesday, March 18 2009



Troubled war veterans leave UK 'sitting on a suicide timebomb'

Published Date: 16 July 2009

FAILINGS in the care given to British troops who suffer from mental illness are a "national scandal", the Tories have claimed.

Shadow defence secretary Liam Fox warned yesterday that the UK was sitting on a "timebomb" of future post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide among Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

Shame of war veterans left to sleep rough

Published Date: 12 April 2009

By Tom Peterkin, Scottish Political Editor

NEW 2008 Ex-Forces and Homeless

Tue 22 Apr, 10:35pm - 11:15pm (40 mins)

On any given night in London alone there are thought to be more than a thousand homeless veterans, and in some parts of the country they number 12% of the homeless population.

es are being failed by the vast majority of Scottish councils, who are following Government guidelines when it comes to finding homes for ex-servicemen and women.

Some local authorities found disabled veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan shabbily treated when it comes to giving them homes adapted to help them cope with their injuries.



for homeless

personnel who have struggled to

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Page last updated at 07:07 GMT, Wednesday, 9 February 2011

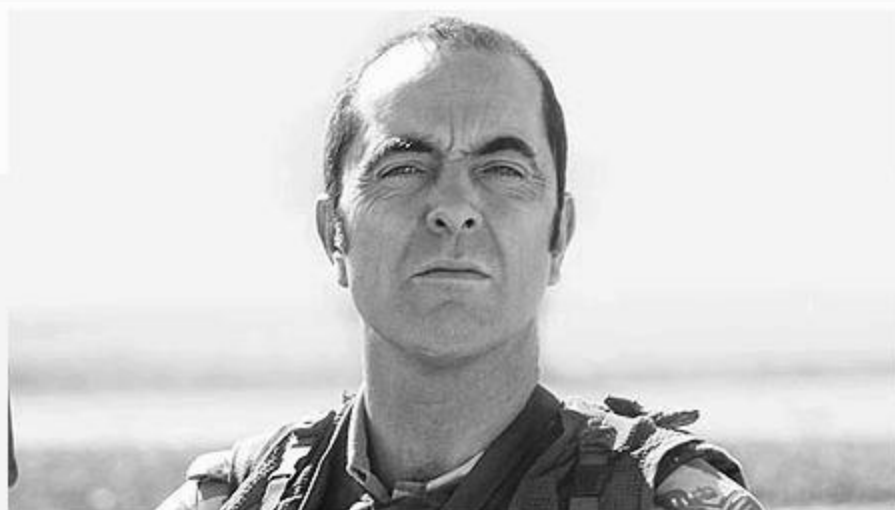
Iraq war hero 'sleeps rough' with former soldier

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Press Packs

Occupation: James Nesbitt plays Mike



Date: 26.05.2009

Category: TV Drama; BBC One

"I wasn't surprised to discover that the marriage breakdown rate among soldiers who return from Iraq is something like 70%. Who do you share those extreme experiences with and how could your partner ever understand? In a way you need to get away from your Army colleagues, but who do you share those inner demons with if not them? Who lives those horrors with you?"

Official: 2,500 ex-servicemen are in prison

Nearly 2,500 ex-servicemen are in prison in England and Wales, official figures show for the first time.

By Christopher Hope (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/christopher-hope/>), **Wellington Editor**

guardian.co.uk

Revealed: the hidden army in UK prisons

More veterans in justice system than soldiers serving in Afghanistan - study

Alan Travis, home affairs editor
guardian.co.uk, Thursday 24 September 2009

From The Times

September 25, 2009

Number of military veterans in jail 'has more than doubled in six years'

Richard Ford, Home Correspondent

The proportion of veterans in the prison population has more than doubled in six years, according to a report published today highlighting the hidden cost of recent military action.

About 12,000 veterans are on probation or parole, representing 6 per cent of the total, while 8,500 are in prison, representing 8.5 per cent of the jail population, according to the report by the National Association of Probation Officers (Napo).

Twenty thousand servicemen in prison, on probation or parole

More than 20,000 former servicemen are in prison or on probation or parole, double the total British personnel in Afghanistan, according to a new survey.

By Chris Irvine (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/chris-irvine/>)
Published: 7:00AM BST 25 Sep 2009

Corrie actor Mikey North on the change in Gary Windass

by Claire Donnelly, Daily Mirror 19/01/2011

a a



HE burst onto our screens two years ago as Weatherfield's cockiest kick-off merchant, Gary Windass.

But now the tearaway-turned-soldier is showing his softer side as he struggles to come to terms with the tragic death of his army pal, Quinny, killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

Even when soldiers leave the frontline, Mikey says they are often haunted by their traumatic experiences.

"The scary thing is there's no time limit on it so you can come home and think you're OK then 'bang' – you feel like you're losing your mind.

"They use drink and drugs to cope, they're drinking to numb the pain and a lot of people get involved in crime and even end up in prison."

“They have been trained in lawlessness, ordered to behave like thugs, and decorated for it..what do you expect?”

New Statesman,

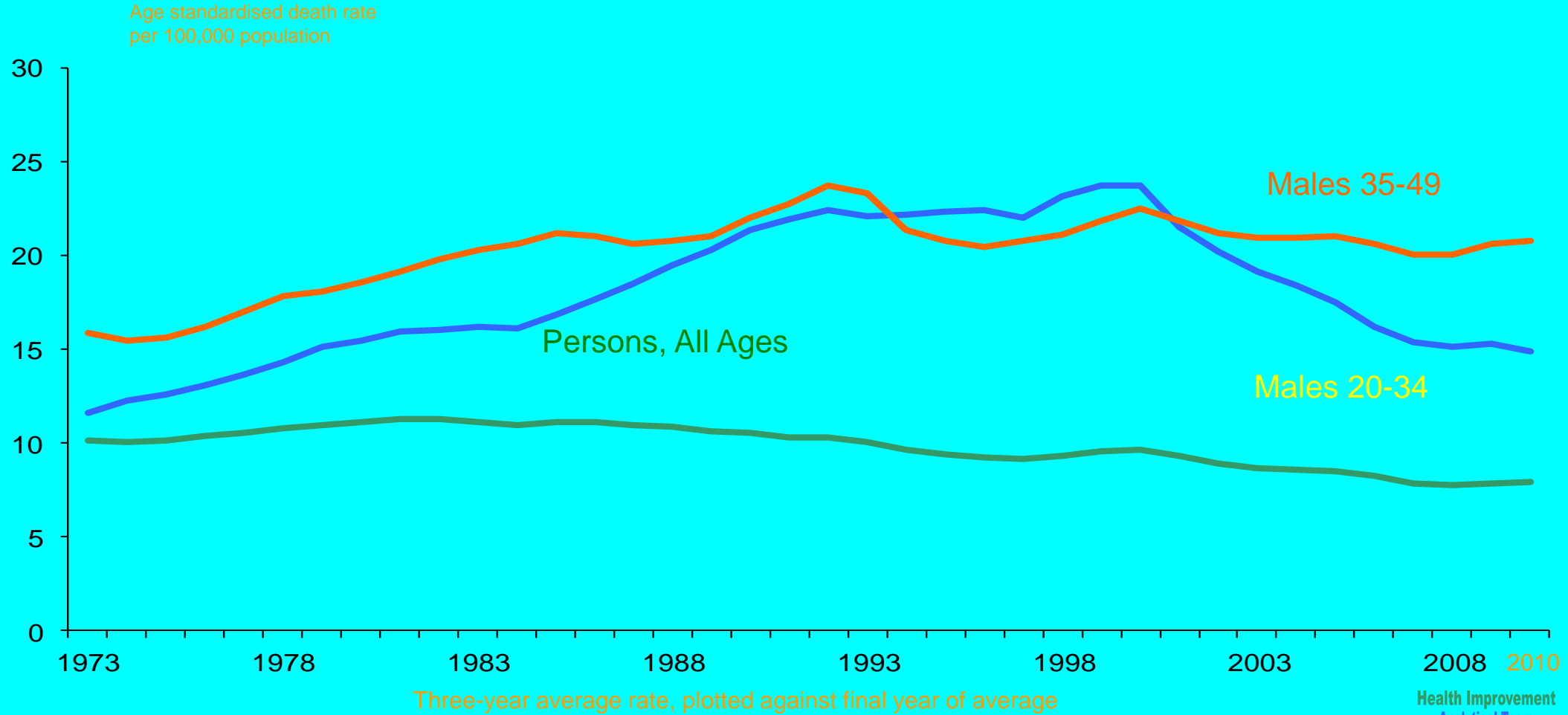
“They have been trained in lawlessness, ordered to behave like thugs, and decorated for it..what do you expect?”

New Statesman, 12th Jan 1946





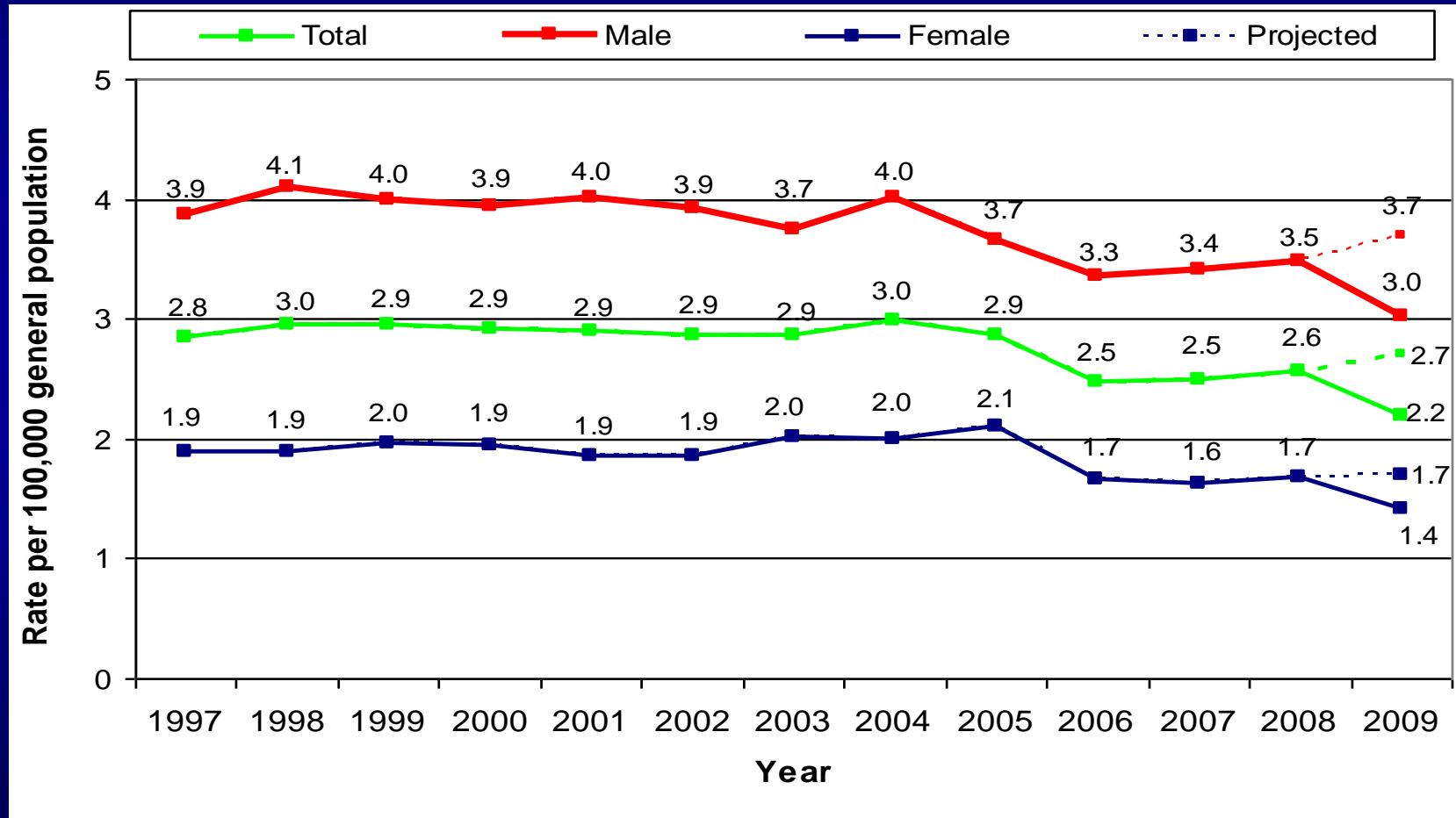
Suicide in young men : UK



Health Improvement
Analytical Team



Patient suicide (England)



Standardised mortality ratios by Service, males, 1984-2011

Service	Number	SMR	95% CI
Navy	124	44	37-53
Army	450	65	59-71
RAF	160	43	37-50

SMR = (number of observed deaths/number of expected deaths)*100

SMRs by age & Service, males, 1984-2011

Age group (years)	Service					
	Navy		Army		RAF	
	N	SMR (95% CI)	N	SMR (95% CI)	N	SMR (95% CI)
<20	7	60 (24-123)	71	146 (116-184)	6	66 (24-143)
20-24	30	46 (32-66)	158	81 (69-94)	34	47 (34-66)
25-29	23	37 (24-56)	88	53 (43-65)	41	48 (35-65)
30-34	22	42 (26-63)	57	48 (37-62)	32	46 (32-65)
35-39	24	50 (32-74)	47	49 (37-65)	21	34 (21-52)
40-44	12	52 (27-91)	21	54 (34-83)	18	45 (27-71)
45-49	5	42 (14-98)	8	49 (21-97)	5	23 (8-54)
50+	-		-		3	22 (5-64)



Study timeline & sample

Phase 1

2003

TELIC 1 (7700)

Era (10000)

Screening (2800)

2006

Figures are approximate

FINDING CURRENT SERVICE PERSONNEL

- 3 waves of postal questionnaires
- Visit over 50 bases and 200 units in UK, Germany, Cyprus, Falklands, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan
- Monthly contact updates from DASA, PJHQ, JPA etc
- Support letters from Single Service Chiefs
- Contact individual adjutants unit by unit
- Lottery, prizes, iPODs, T shirts (green not white) etc
- Telephone interviews of non responders

FINDING SERVICE LEAVERS

1. Use original contact details provided by service personnel
2. Check contact details have been entered correctly in the database from their handwritten responses
3. If still serving personnel, contact tri-service MOD switchboard to check if they have changed jobs
4. If veteran, check 192.com (directory enquiries) for participant
5. Check electoral register
6. Ask Army Personnel Centre to forward our letter requesting new contact details
7. Ask DWP to forward contact details letter on our behalf to veterans who are claiming benefits
8. Search 192.com and electoral register for nearest relative and write to them requesting that they send on our letter on to their relative
9. Check to see if service charities are in touch with veteran, and ask them to pass on a letter from us
10. NHS tracing after PIAG approval
11. DWP tracing after DWP PIAG approval
- 12. Call Mother.**

“50 Ways to Trace Your Veteran”, Eur J
Psychotrauma, 2011

For whom the battle still rages

Post-traumatic stress disorder can strike immediately or decades after a soldier has left the combat zone. The Iraqi conflict will certainly bring many new victims but there is little help at hand



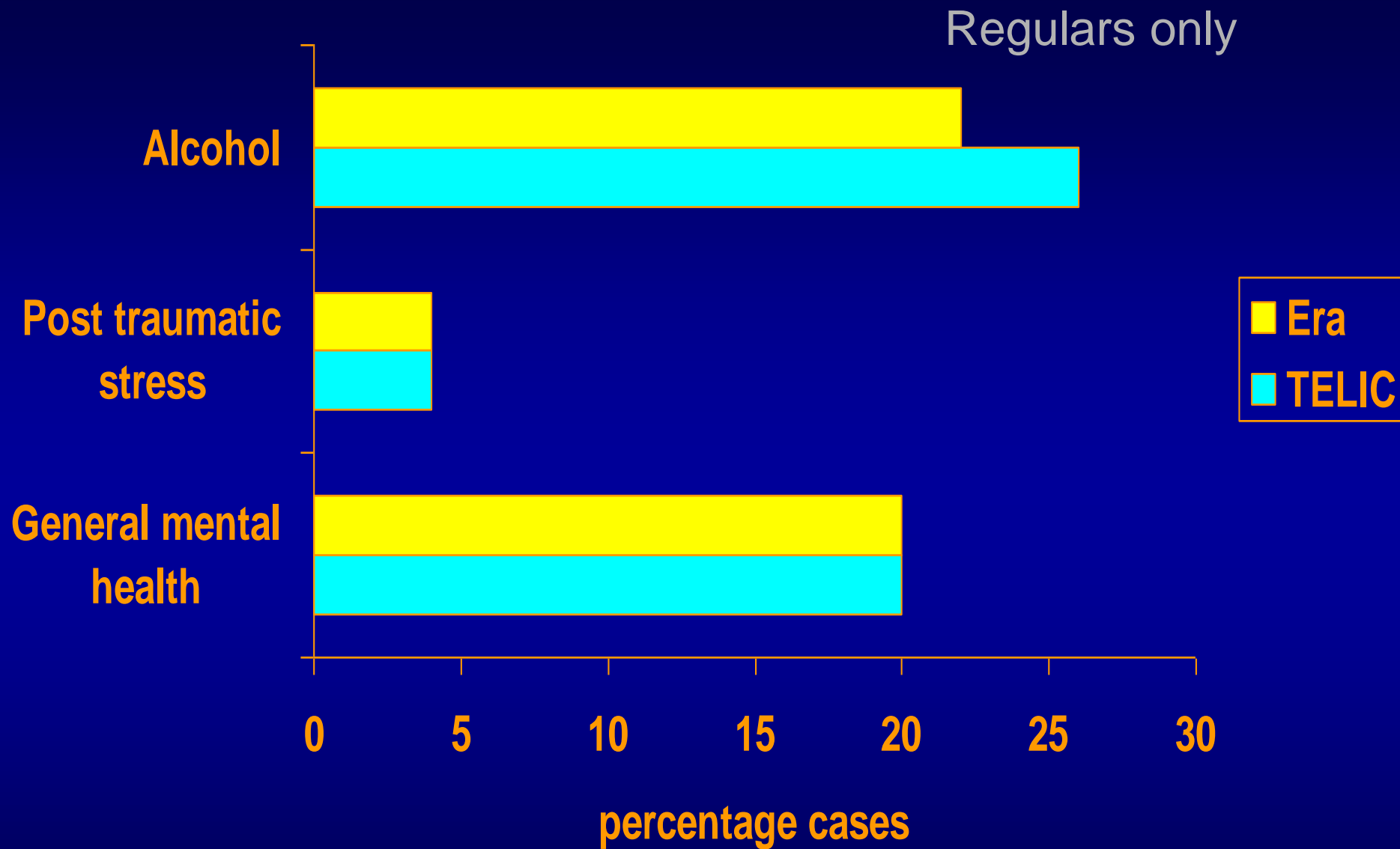
By
Decca
Aitkenhead

THE GARDENS of Tyrwhitt House are velvety soft and emerald green in the sunshine. Men amble alone across the lawns, and gather on shaded benches, sipping tea and talking quietly. From a distance, they could be hotel guests, except that a number are wearing pyjamas. They are shy at first, edgy, with a nervy anger twitching in their fingers and, as they talk, it becomes clear that something is very wrong for all of them.

Tyrwhitt House is a residential treatment centre in Surrey for ex-servicemen and women suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

shakes. All fought on the winning side and most display pride in their service by the very way they move. But they are no use to the Army any more; this is where some of the men who've been fighting in the most recent conflict, the Gulf, will inevitably end up.

Rupert Williams fought in the 1991 Gulf war. Just 30, he arrived for the first time last week and is sitting alone on the grass, his body lifeless but stiff. He signed up at 16 for the usual reasons - broken home and a suggestion from the careers office - and at 17 was sent to Germany. His was a violent battalion. Boy



Last Updated: Tuesday, 10 May, 2005, 04:20 GMT 05:20 UK

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Iraq reservists 'need more help'

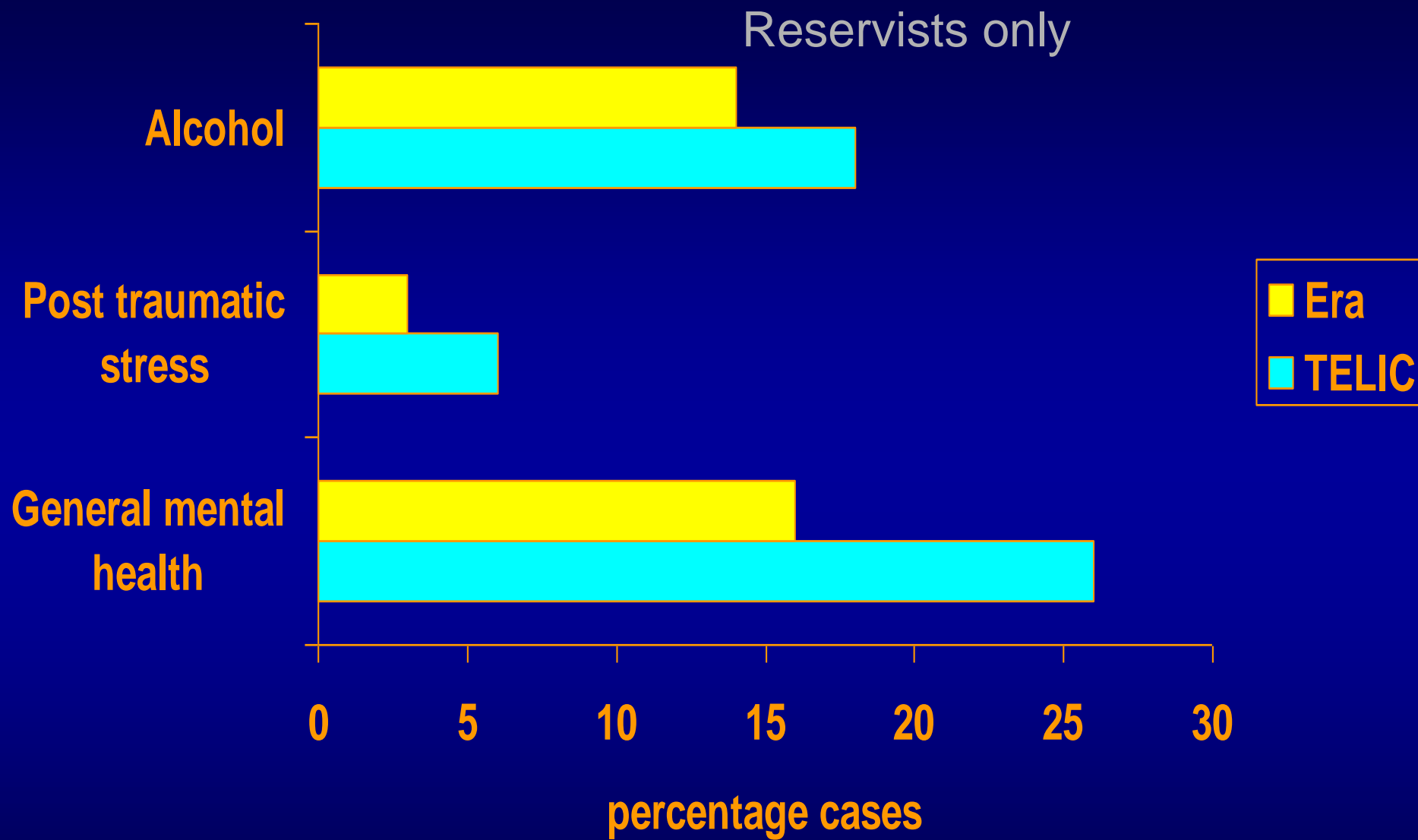
Half of all Iraq war veterans seeking help for mental illness are Territorial Army soldiers, despite making up only 10% of deployments, a charity says.

Combat Stress blamed a rise in those seeking help partly on a shortage of NHS skills and a lack of MoD support.

Some 25 reservists currently account for 50% of its referrals, it says.



Reserve forces make up 10% of British deployments to Iraq

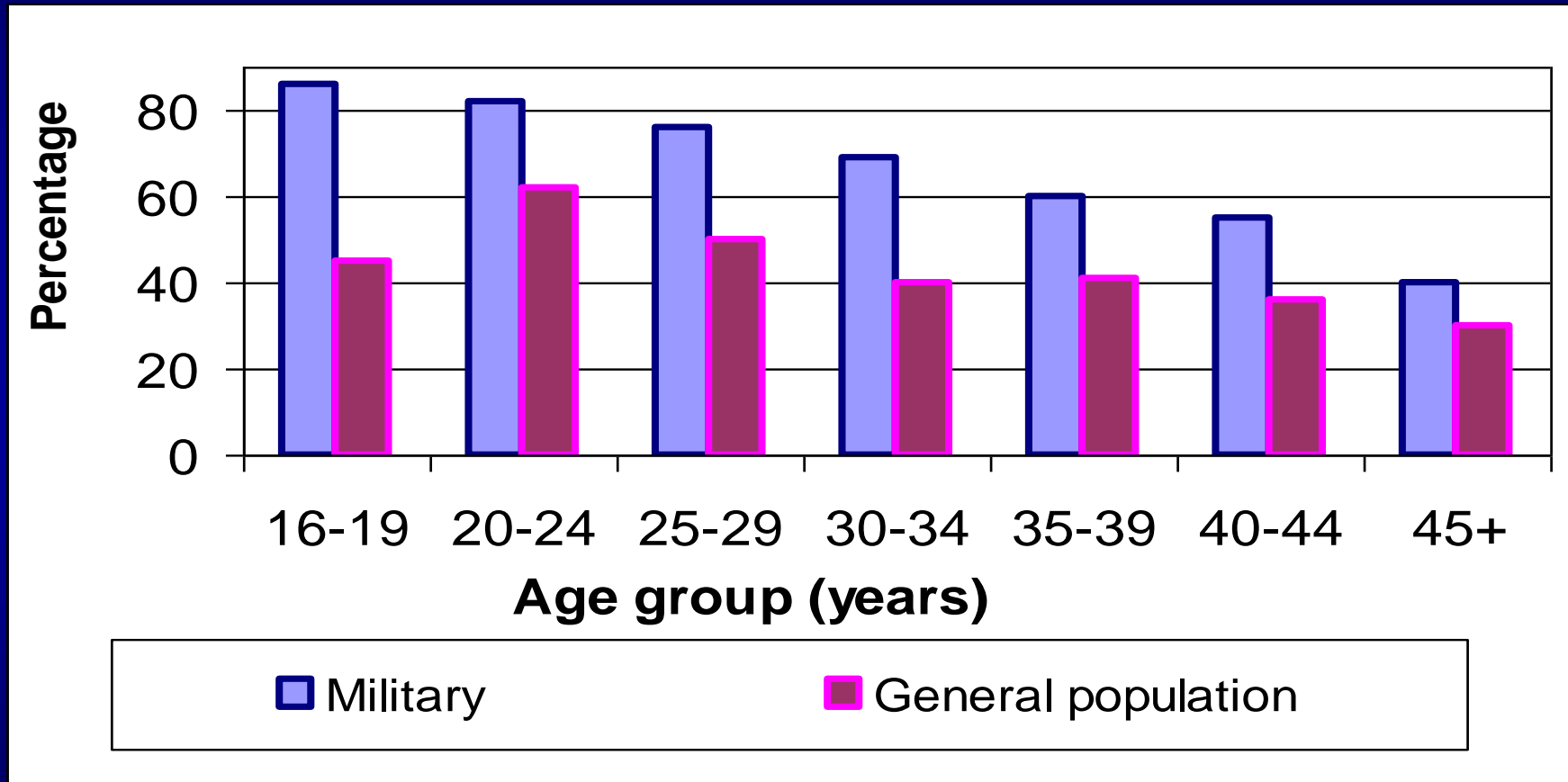


Role of combat

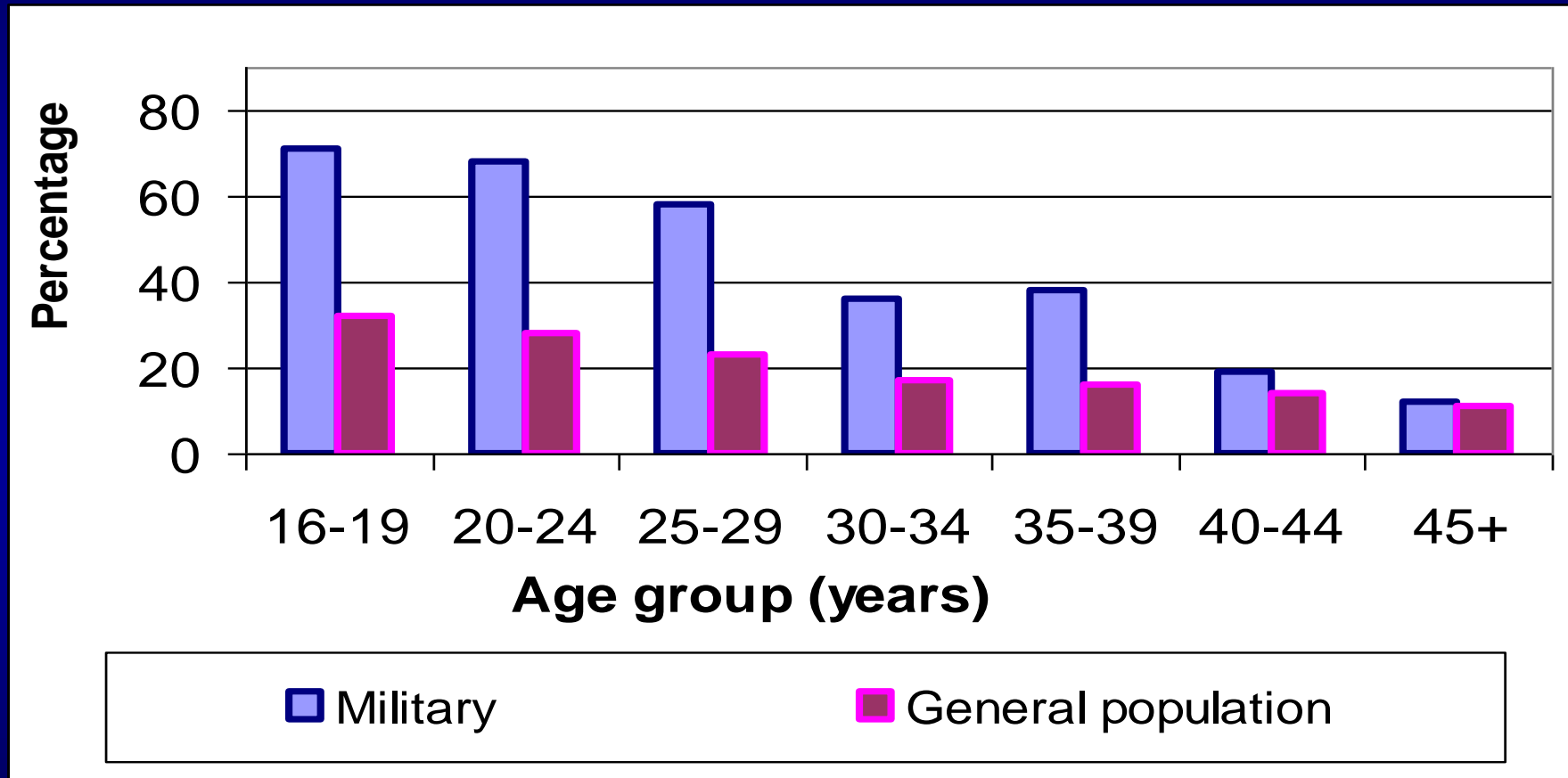
Outcome	Combat (25.0%)	Combat support (12.0%)	Combat service support (63.1%)
Probable PTSD	6.9%	2.1%	3.6%
Common mental disorders	20.6%	18.3%	19.7%
Alcohol misuse	22.5%	10.8%	14.2%



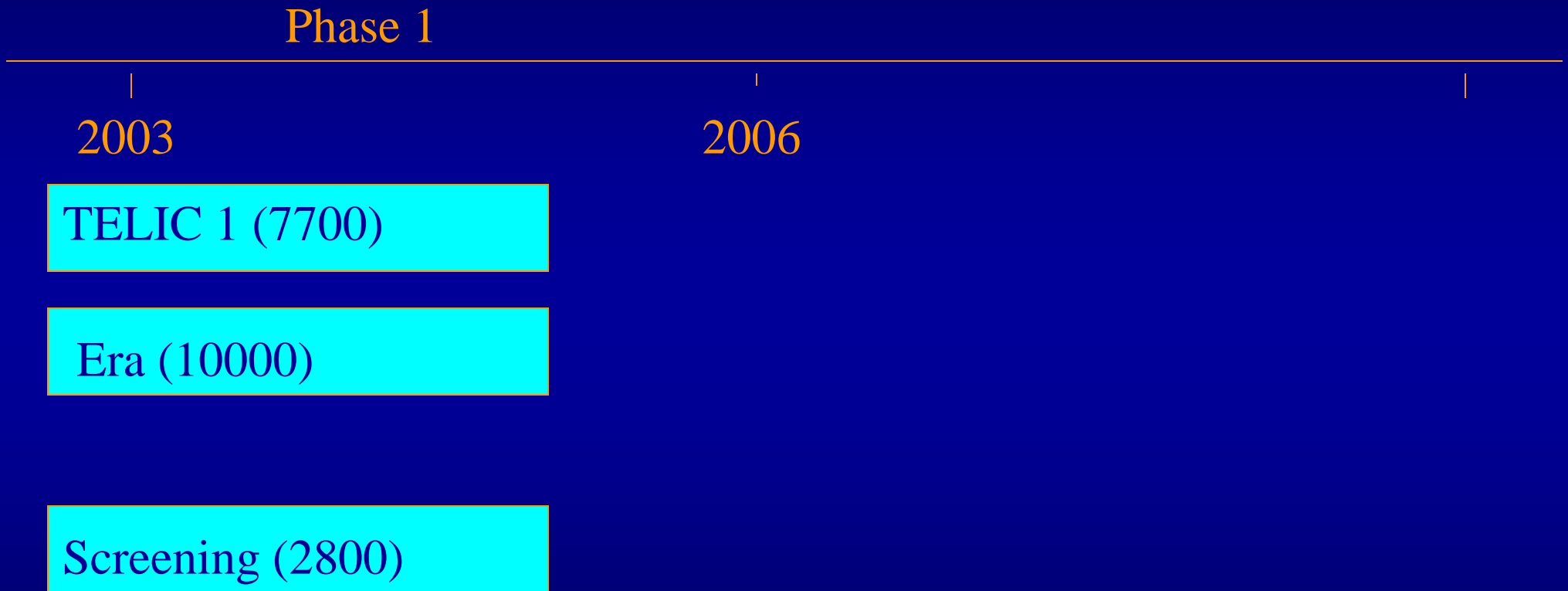
UK Armed Forces vs. the general population: **Males (67% vs. 38%)**



UK Armed Forces vs. the general population: Females (49% vs. 16%)



Phase 1

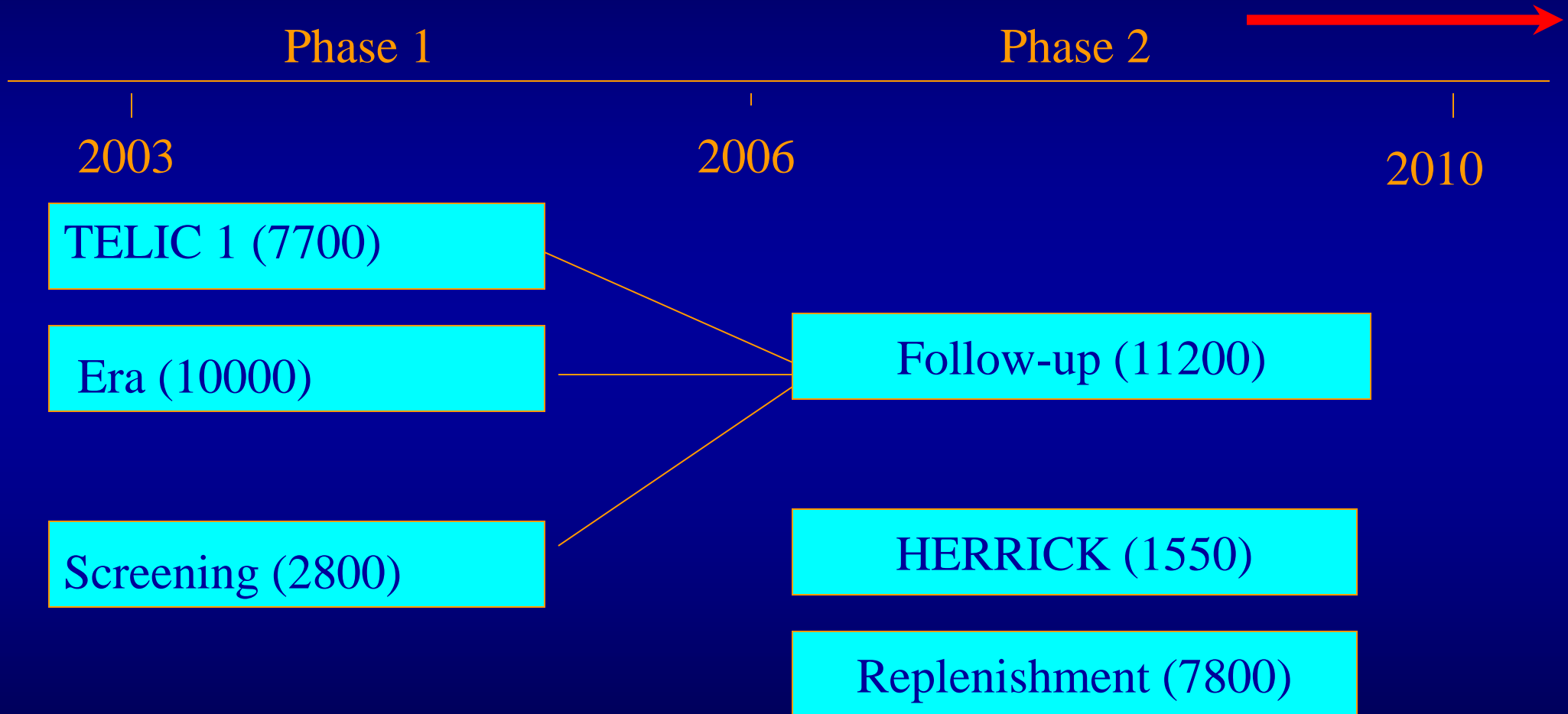


Figures are approximate

But the war continued.....



Phase 2



Figures are approximate

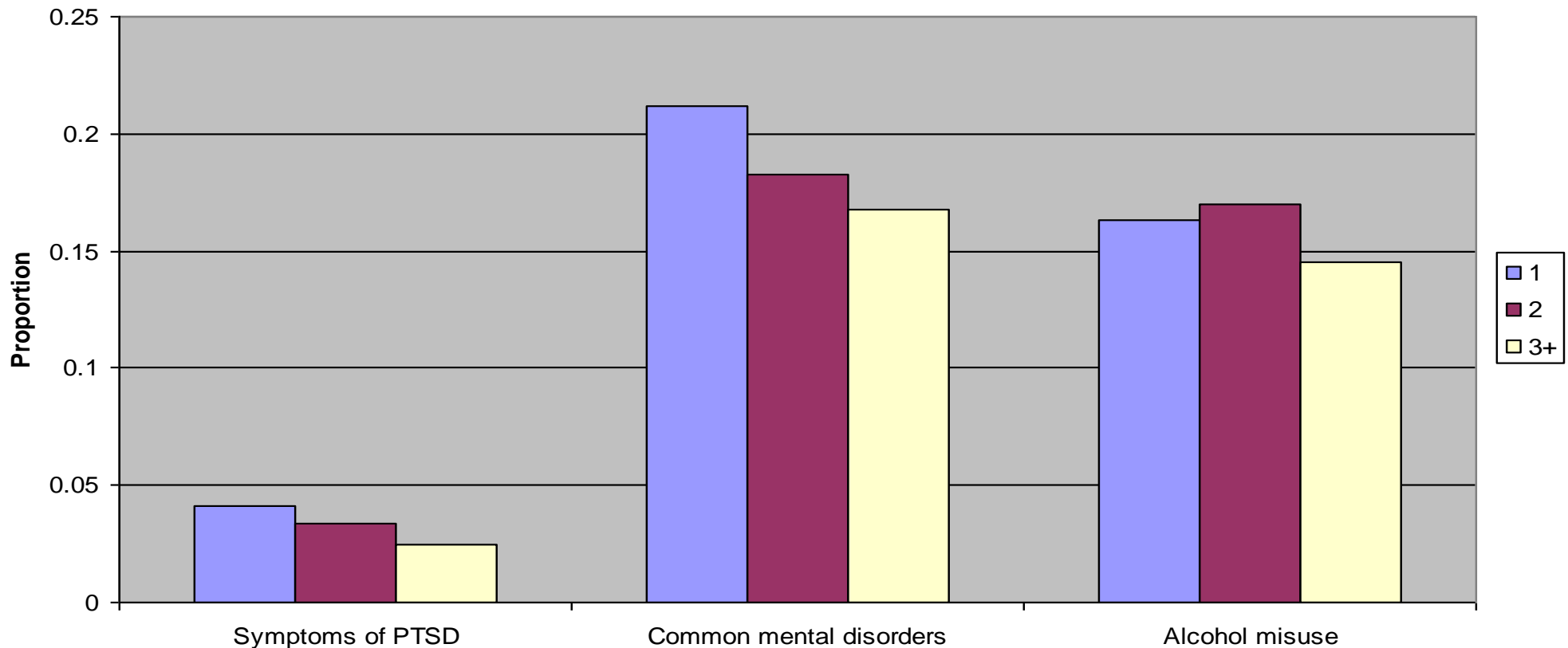
Prevalence of outcomes among Regulars – 2003-2009

	2003-2005		2007-2009	
Outcome	Rest	Iraq	Non-deploy	Iraq/Afghanistan
PTSD	4%	4%	4%	4%
General	19%	20%	20%	20%
Alcohol	14%	18%	10%	16%

Prevalence of outcomes among Reserves – 2003-2009

	2003-2005		2007-2009	
Outcome	Rest	Iraq	Non-deploy	Iraq/Afghanistan
PTSD	3%	6%	2%	5%
General	16%	26%	19%	19%
Alcohol	8%	10%	8%	9%

Total number of deployments to 2010 – currently serving UK Army regulars



US UK: Similarities and Differences.



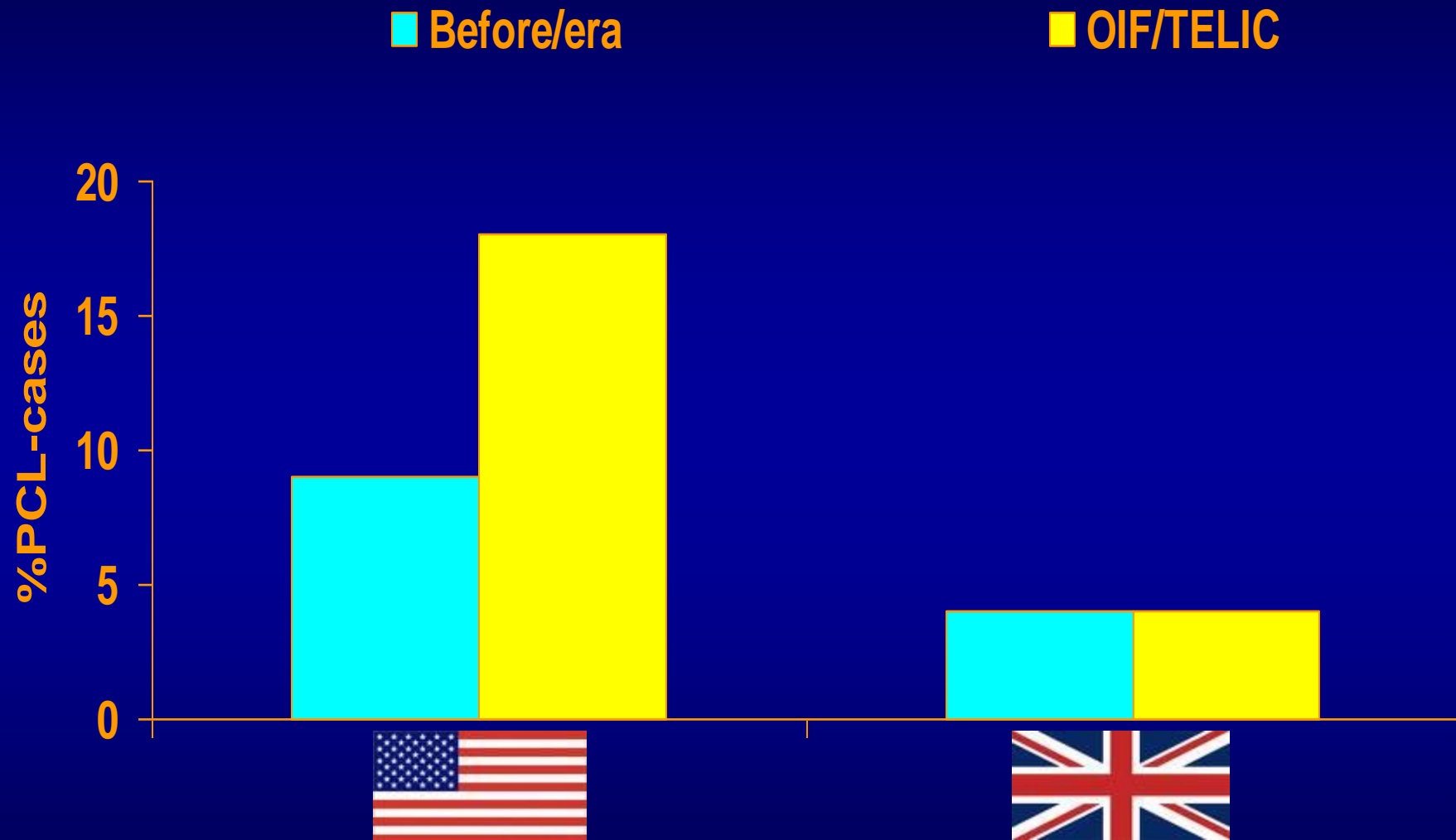




US UK: Similarities and Differences.



Rates of PTSD: All TELIC versus Combat Infantry OIF

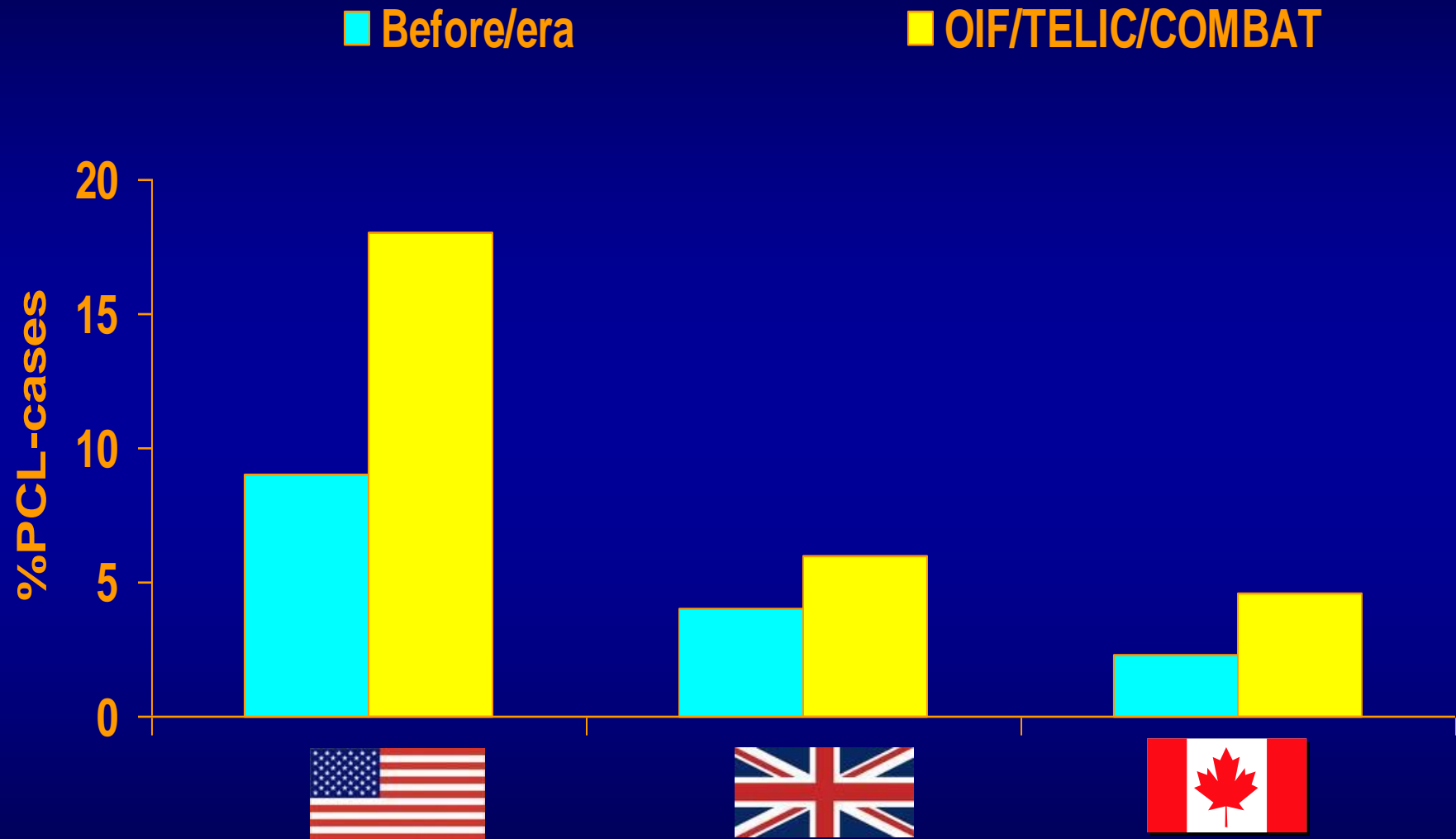


US: Hoge et al NEJM 2004; 351:13-22

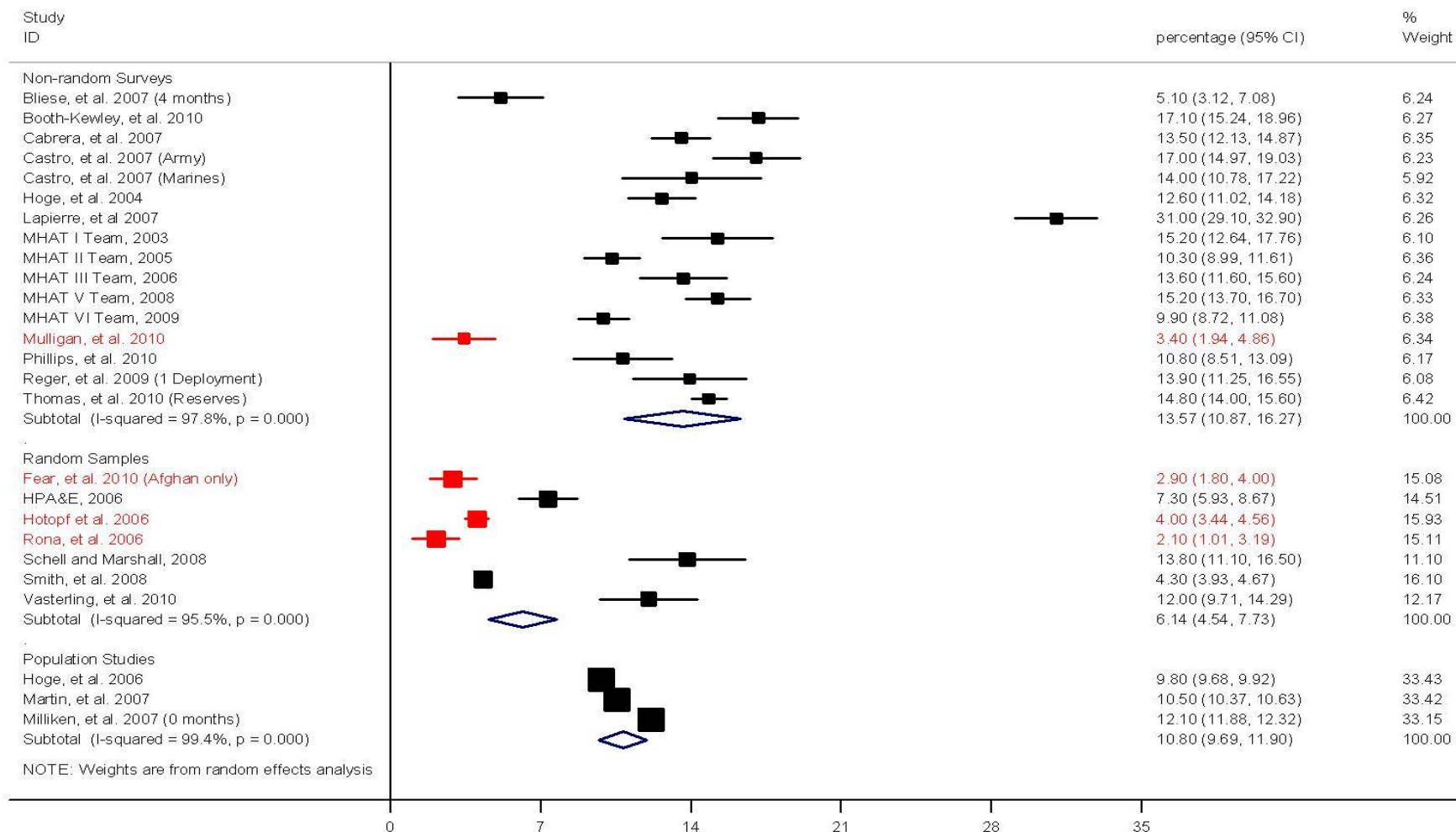
UK: Hotopf et al. Lancet 2006; 367: 1731-1741



Rates of PTSD: TELIC “Teeth arms” versus Combat Infantry OIF




US: Hoge et al NEJM 2004; UK: Hotopf et al. Lancet 2006; Canada; Sareen et al, Archives 2007



Graphical display of PTSD prevalence stratified by study type (UK studies are marked in red).

What might account for the US- UK differences?

– **Demographics**

-  older, more officers, fewer reserves

– **Location in theatre**

-  higher rate of fatalities in Iraq (but not Afghan)

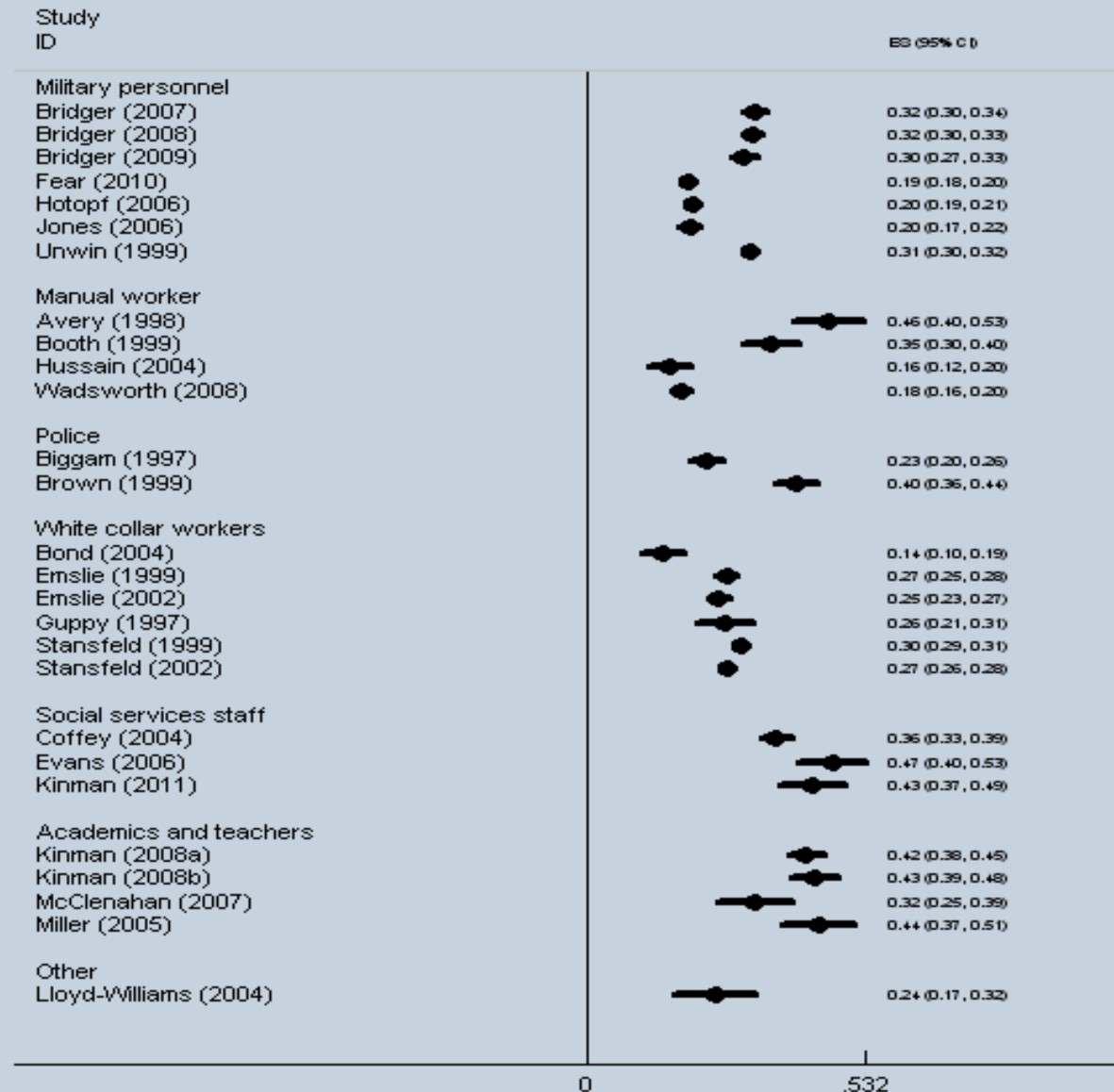
– **Time in theatre**

-  shorter

TABLE 2. (Continued)


Kok et al, J Psych Res 2012

ID	Study Sample	Size	%	95% CI	Weight, %
Random population samples					
Random population samples–predeployment/nondeployed–PCL strict cutoff					
19	Riddle et al. (2007)	76,476	2.4	2.3–2.5	61.48
20A	LeardMann et al. (2009)	5605	3.5	3.0–4.0	3.14
21A	Smith et al. (2008a)	37,734 ^f	3.3	3.1–3.5	22.35
22A	Rona et al. (2006)–UK Forces, TELIC 1	383	1.6	0.3–2.8	0.56
22B	Rona et al. (2006)–UK Forces, TELIC2–6	286	2.4	0.7–4.2	0.18
22C	Rona et al. (2006)– ERA control	1216	2.6	1.7–3.5	0.78
23A	Hotopf et al. (2006)	5550	3.5	3.0–4.0	3.01
24A	Fear et al. (2010)	3255 ^c	3.3	2.7–4.0	1.89
27	Bray et al. (2006) (standardized)	9090	5.7	5.2–6.2	3.18
28	Bray et al. (2009) (standardized)	13,685	8.2	7.7–8.7	3.42
$I^2 = 98.8\%$	Pooled sample	153,280	3.0	2.9–3.1	100





“Prevalence” of mTBI and mTBI (LOC)

Researchers	mTBI (%)	mTBI (LOC) (%)
Hoge et al. (2008)	15.2%	4.9%
Pietrzak et al. (2009)	18.8%	6.1%
Polusny et al. (2011) End of tour A year later	9.2% 22.0%	-----
Schneiderman et al. (2008)	12.0%	-----
Terrio et al. (2009)	23.0%	8.4%
Tanielan, Jaycox (2008)	19.5%	-----
Vasterling et al.	-----	7.0%
Rona et al. (2012) 	4.4%	0.7%

But what about when they come home?



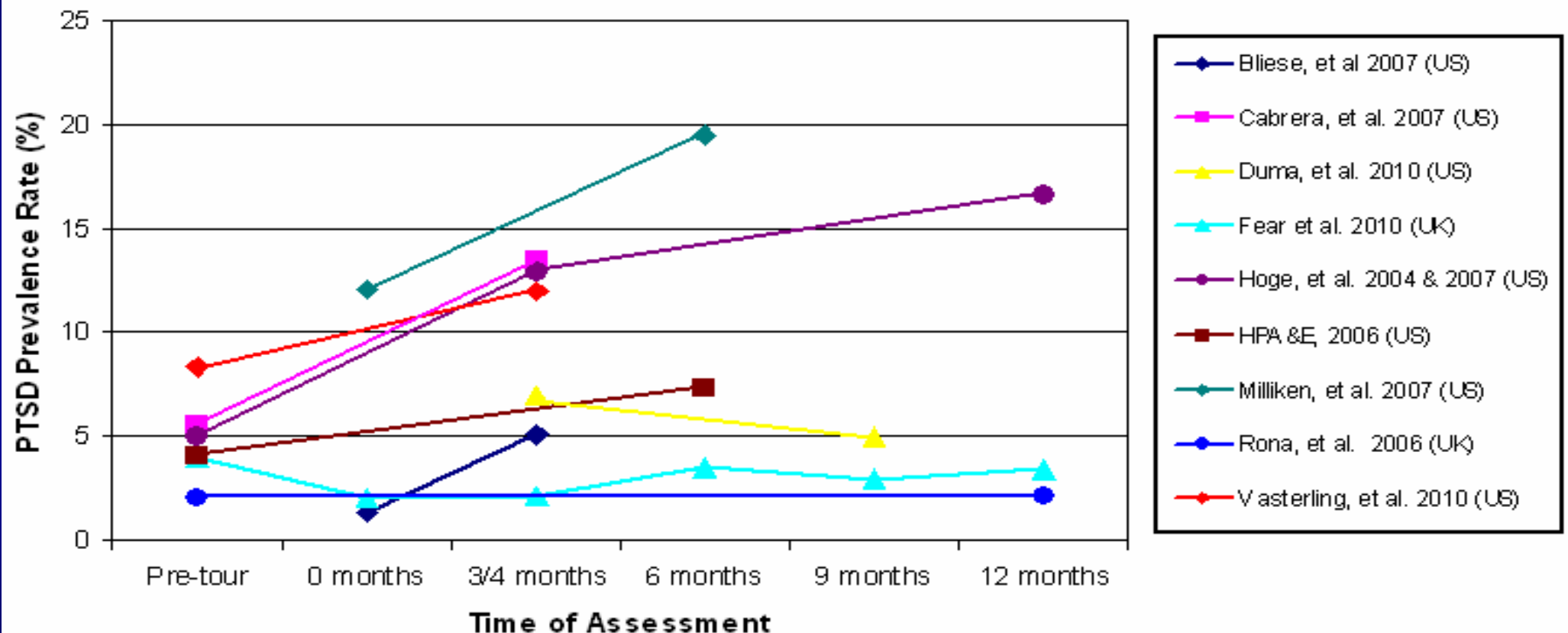
Alcohol
Misuse

Common Mental
Disorder

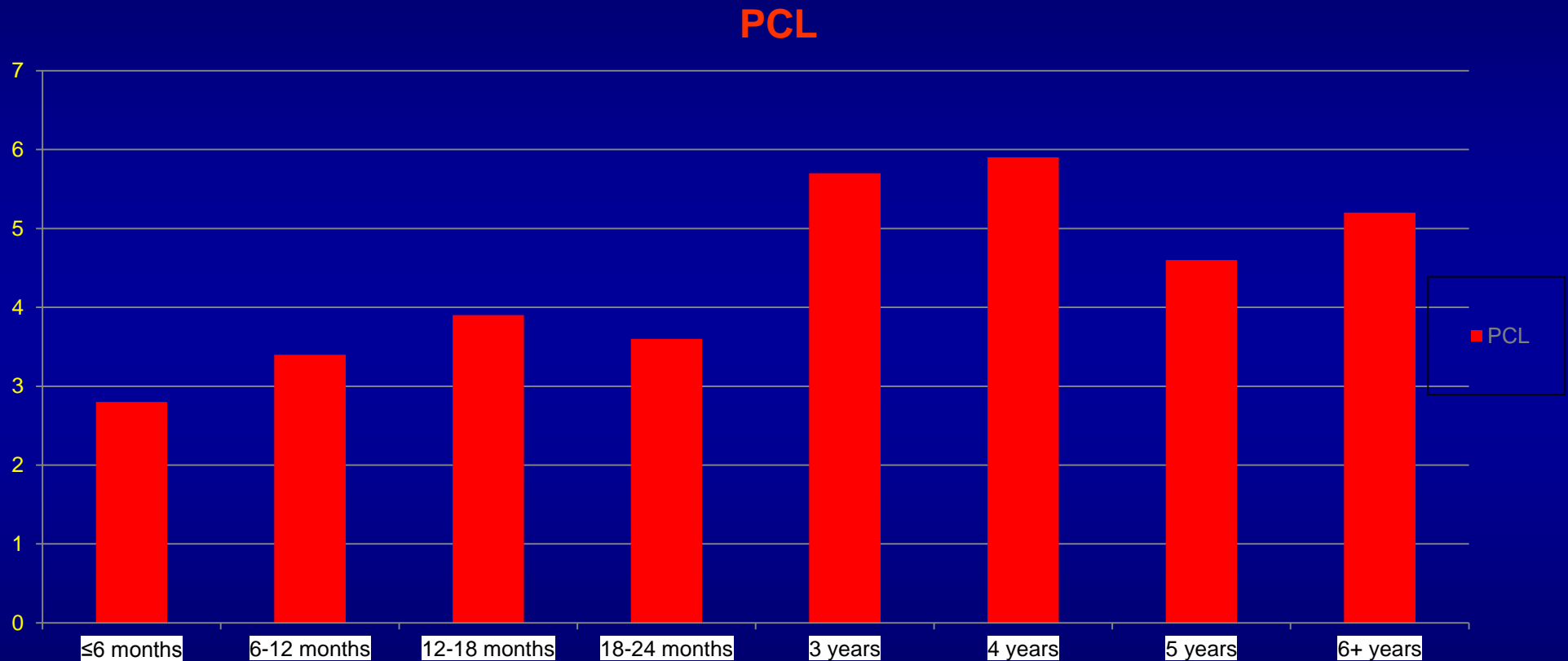
Post-Traumatic Stress
Disorder



Time since last deployment



PTSD and time since last deployment: UK



Fear et al, Lancet,
2010



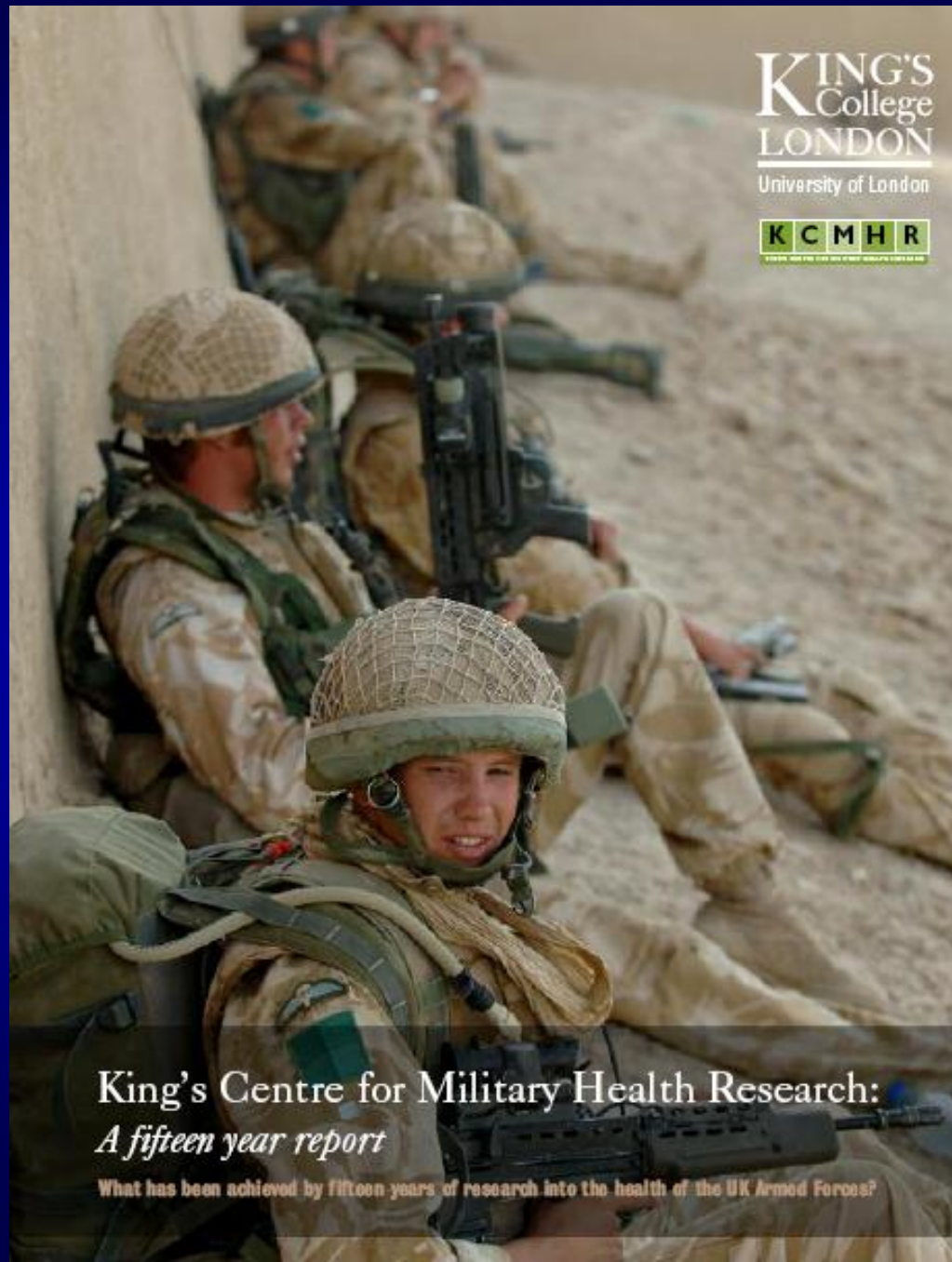
Food for thought

- PTSD is not the main mental health problem facing the UK Armed Forces, nor is it as yet increasing
- Combat (“teeth arms”) have more PTSD and more alcohol
- Reservists consistently have more PTSD but less alcohol than Regulars
- Overall the group most at risk of all problems (drink, drugs, poor mental health, unemployment, trouble with the Law, debt etc) are Early Service Leavers (> 4 years)



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